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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides Grade 6 teachers, administrators, and students with samples of students' writing that exemplify the criteria used to score students' written responses on the June 1988 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. The writing assignment required students to read the beginning of a story and use their imaginations to complete the story. The papers included in this booklet generally illustrate the quality of students' work at each of the five levels of accomplishment described in the scoring guide. Accompanying each student's response is a discussion relating the characteristics of the response to the descriptors in the scoring guide. The booklet also includes sections on approaches to planning and drafting, and development issues. An appendix provides a sample scoring guide. (MM)

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this booklet is to provide Grade 6 teachers, administrators, and students with samples of students' writing that exemplify the criteria used to score students' written responses on the June 1988 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. Examples of the full range of students' writing are provided. The accompanying commentaries highlight selected features of the students' responses and show how the scoring criteria relate to the students' work.

Contents

The Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test consisted of two parts: Part A: Composition and Part B: Reading. This booklet deals with the composition assignment, which required students to read the beginning of a story and use their imaginations to complete the story.

Each sample paper in this booklet has been reproduced as it appeared to the markers, that is, in the student's own handwriting. The planning and drafting sections of the work are included. As well, students' approaches to planning, drafting, and editing in additional papers are addressed in the APPROACHES TO PLANNING AND DRAFTING section.

Accompanying each student's response is a discussion relating the characteristics of the response to the descriptors in the scoring guide.

A copy of the scoring guide is included in the APPENDIX, page 38.

Selection of papers

The sample papers selected for this booklet were used as samples for training markers during the July 1988 marking session. As such, these papers generally illustrate the quality of students' work at each of the five levels of accomplishment described in the scoring guide. The range of quality of students' writing is scored as follows: EXCELLENT-5, PROFICIENT-4, SATISFACTORY-3, LIMITED-2, and POOR-1. Each paper was assessed on this five-point scale for specific qualities within each of the following reporting categories: CONTENT, DEVELOPMENT, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, VOCABULARY, and CONVENTIONS.

Although the sample papers in this booklet were selected because each generally illustrates an overall score, variations from that overall score did exist within some reporting categories.

Establishing standards

The initial work of determining the standards that would govern the scoring of the June 1988 composition test was undertaken by a group of experienced Grade 6 English Language Arts teachers whose task was to read a large enough random sample of papers to determine the upper and lower ranges of the writing. These teachers, or range finders, also suggested minor adjustments to the scoring guide in order to facilitate the marking of the assignment. They then selected papers that were representative of the range and illustrative of the various scoring descriptors to be used for training group leaders and markers.

The second step in establishing standards was a day-long session held with those teachers specially selected to serve as leaders of small groups of markers. These teachers reviewed the representative papers from range finding and endorsed them as appropriate examples of the various scores possible, thus setting standards for the marking.

Marking Process

Teachers were selected for marking on the recommendations of their superintendents. All of the teachers were teaching Grade 6 English Language Arts at the time of the marking session and had done so for at least two years. They spent the first hours of the marking period in an intensive training session that included a review of the scoring descriptors as the descriptors related to the representative papers previously selected by the range finders and endorsed by the group leaders. It is these papers that are discussed in the pages that follow.

Neither the name of the student nor the name of the school appeared on the test papers. Markers were advised not to mark a paper if they suspected that they recognized its source. They were instructed to disregard the quality of handwriting in evaluating the papers and to return a paper unmarked if they thought the handwriting could influence their judgment. The markers were also instructed to check the rough work if they suspected that an error had been made in copying from the original draft. Markers also referred to the rough draft in order to add to their understanding of the writer's intent. No marks were placed on the test booklets during the marking process. Scores were recorded on a separate score sheet. Papers were read by one marker. A random sample of papers was read a second time in order to establish inter-marker reliability.

Cautions

The following cautions should be kept in mind when reading this booklet or when using the contents for instructional planning.

1. These papers are samples of students' writing that reflect an interpretation of the standards that teachers established specifically for the July 1988 marking session. The interpretation of the standards and the judgments made by the markers at that time may vary with other writing assignments and with writing completed under different circumstances. Therefore, these samples should not be used as *models* of writing for instructional purposes. Rather, they are intended to indicate how teachers and students can determine strengths and weaknesses and use this information to improve students' writing.

2. Readers should consider each student's accomplishments in light of the constraints of test writing. Under test-writing conditions, students were able to produce writing that must be considered as first-draft only. When students write under conditions that permit discussion, conferring, review, and reflection, they may produce work that differs substantially from what is illustrated here.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This booklet would not have been possible without the student writers who kindly granted us permission to publish their work, and the valuable contributions of the following teachers:

Drafting of commentaries	Patricia Hogan - The University of Calgary
Range finding for the selection of sample papers	Beverly Convey - County of Vermilion River #24 Patricia Hogan - The University of Calgary Linda Olivier - Taber School Division #6 Martin Rempel - Fort McMurray School District #2833 Patricia Sprague - County of Strathcona #20
Group leaders reviewing the sample papers	Ann Alexandruk - Edmonton School District #7 Linda Bridger - Cardston School District #2 Melinda Christie - Calgary School District #19 Beverly Convey - County of Vermilion River #24 George Dixon - Fairview School Division #50 John Drysdale - Calgary School District #19 Linda Duncan - Edmonton School District #7 Dick Hehr - Calgary School District #19 Calvin Leckie - County of Vermilion River #24 Paul Leighton - Acadia School Division #8 Sherrie MacRae - Calgary School District #19 Linda Olivier - Taber School Division #6 Jeanne Olson - Camrose School District #1315 Laurie Peterman - Calgary School District #19 Ronald Probert - Edmonton School District #7 Martin Rempel - Fort McMurray School District #2833 Lynda Rive - Calgary R.C.S.S. District #1 Rose Rybotycki - Edmonton School District #7 Raymond Soetaert - Sturgeon School Division #24 Jim Spivak - Edmonton School District #7 Patricia Sprague - County of Strathcona #20 Donna Tabor - Calgary School District #19 Ken Werenka - County of Strathcona #20 Judy Wood - St. Albert School District #3 Peter Zapisocky - Edmonton R.C.S.S. District #7

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GENERAL COMMENTARY

When the entire range of papers produced on the June 1988 English Language Arts Achievement Test is viewed, several observations may be made about how Grade 6 students manage the assigned writing task. The papers are a source of information about the many and varied approaches students take to planning and drafting their writing. Indications of how students develop as writers are also present. The following discussion is offered to teachers concerned with these issues and with their implications.

Range finders and markers were pleased to note that the general quality of writing by Grade 6 students appears to be improving. Teacher comments indicate that there is more writing going on in classrooms. When students write frequently to address their own purposes, they are usually better equipped to handle a test situation. Also, when students are given many opportunities to write in a wide variety of formats for diverse audiences, their comfort with their experiences as writers is demonstrated in tests such as this one. Teachers can help students by providing instruction, adequate time, and occasion for writing in the classroom. They can also assist students to learn how to address specific features of writing in order to fulfil their intentions.

In testing situations, such as this one, students must draw on their knowledge and experience in order to respond to the assigned task. Students' awareness of story structure or "sense of story" is demonstrated repeatedly in the June 1988 papers. When students read and are read to from a rich and varied abundance of literature, they develop a deeply rooted sense of story that is reflected in their writing. Also, when students attempt to discover why and how stories appeal to readers, they come to understand how to write effectively. Teachers can help students with writing by setting up many and various encounters with literature in the classroom. They can also help students explore the techniques and strategies authors use in their writing.

The range and extent of students' experiences are evident in their imaginative responses to the story starter. Students created contexts that reflect personal life experiences as well as encounters with text and with the media. Popular themes included space and time travel, environmental disaster, and fantasy in various forms. Many students incorporated knowledge acquired in other subject areas. Others borrowed elements from movie plots, television programs, and popular children's stories. In the classroom, teachers can help students by confirming that their own experiences, interests, and observations are valuable and are the best foundations on which to build their writing. Teachers can also help students by building background for writing about less familiar topics and by assisting students in focusing their writing.

GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACHIEVEMENT TEST

PART A

COMPOSITION ASSIGNMENT

JUNE 1988

GRADE 6 ACHIEVEMENT TEST
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

PART A: Composition

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

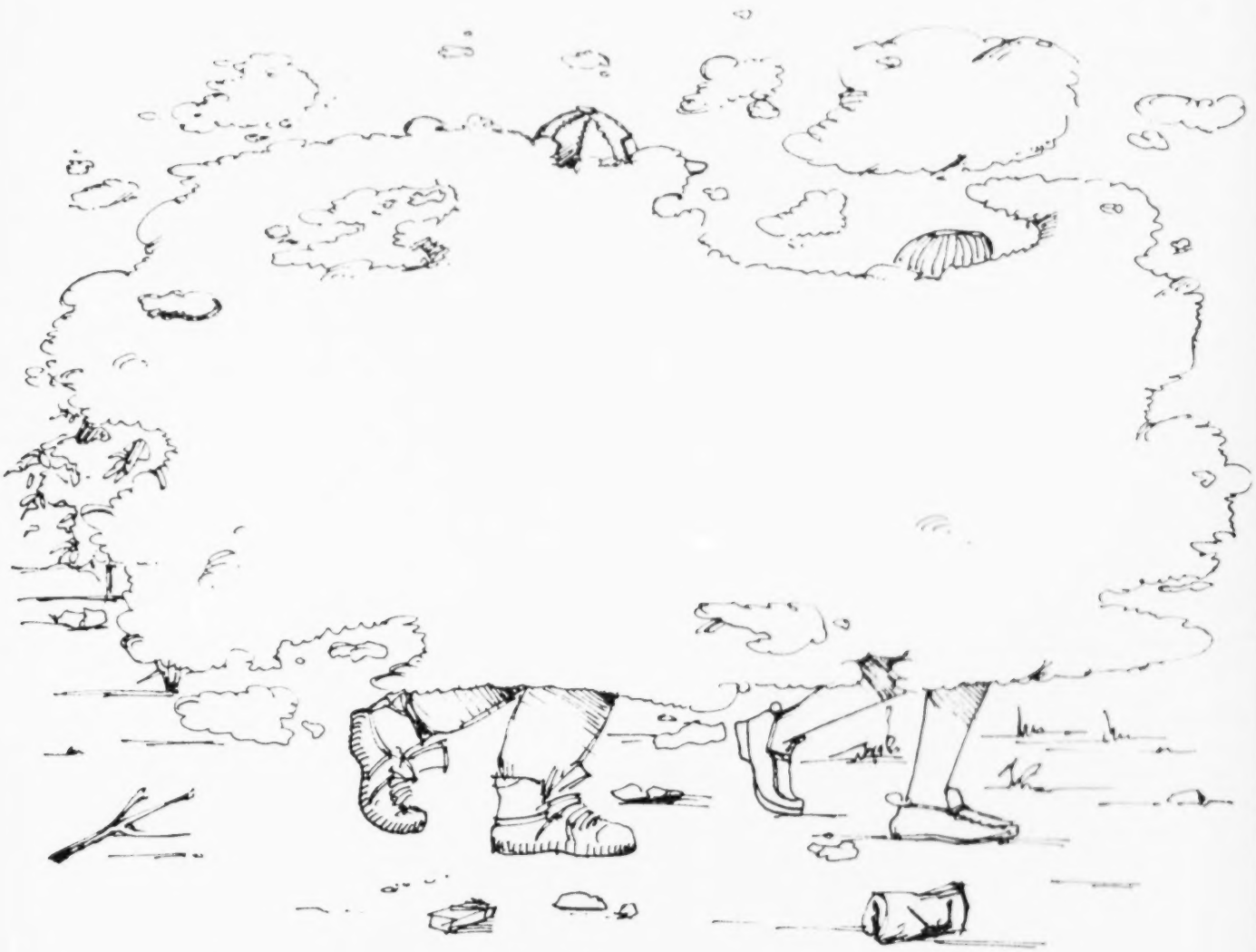
- In this test you are asked to write a story.
- You may use an ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY.
- If you want to write down your ideas AND/OR make a plan before you write your story, do so on the **IDEAS/PLANNING** page.
- If you want to write a draft of your story, do so on the pages labelled **PLANNING AND DRAFTING.**
- Write your revised work on the pages labelled **REVISED WORK.**
- Remember that you may make changes and corrections on your revised work.
- Your story will be evaluated on WHAT you say and HOW WELL you say it (on CONTENT, DEVELOPMENT, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, VOCABULARY, and CONVENTIONS).
- YOU HAVE 80 MINUTES TO COMPLETE THIS TEST.

The following is the beginning of a story. After you have read it, use your imagination to write about what happens.

School was out. Mike and Joan were looking forward to summer vacation. They lazily kicked at sticks and stones on their way home.

Mike spied an old tin can near the ditch and, with a great burst of energy, kicked the can high into the air. As it soared, the can split open, and a white foggy mist escaped.

Within moments the children were surrounded by the strange mist. When they were able to see again, Mike and Joan noticed how everything had changed . . .



SAMPLES

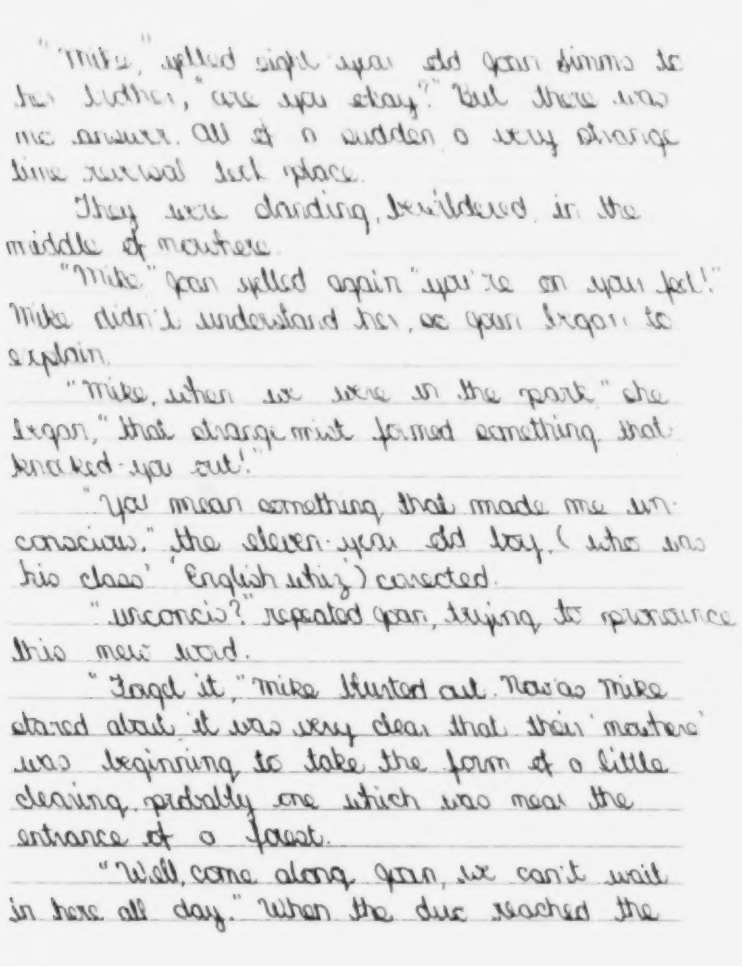
OF

STUDENTS' WRITING

Student Sample A

General Comments

Displaying confidence and competence, this writer produces an effective, cohesive story. The writer's background knowledge is successfully employed to establish and maintain a setting. A sense of purpose and direction in the writing is apparent. While the theme is not unique, the piece is lively, clear, and consistent. It is representative of a 5 EXCELLENT in most reporting categories.



"Mike," yelled right upon at your sister to her brother, are you okay." But there was no answer. All of a sudden a very strange time warp took place.

They were standing, bewildered in the middle of nowhere.

"Mike" Joan yelled again "you're on your feet!" Mike didn't understand her, so Joan began to explain.

"Mike, when we were in the park" she began," that strange mist formed something that knocked you out."

"You mean something that made me unconscious." the eleven-year old boy, (who was his class' English whiz) corrected.

"unconcis?" repeated Joan, trying to pronounce this new word.

"I got it," Mike blurted out. Now as Mike stared about it was very clear that their nowhere was beginning to take the form of a little clearing, probably one which was near the entrance of a forest.

"Well, come along Joan, we can't wait in here all day." When the duo reached the

Content

The events and actions in this story are feasible within the setting created by the writer. Initially, as the characters attempt to establish their location, the writer uses dialogue to engage the reader's attention and to provide details about the characters' names, ages, and relationship to one another. Once the pioneer setting is established, details such as prices and descriptions of clothing maintain the story's atmosphere. Two small details are incongruous within the historical context: the "cashier" anticipates a "lunch break." Having the sheriff place the children for adoption adds further believable detail and extends the action. The children's feelings about their situation and the clothing they wear are in keeping with their individual personalities and assist the development of the story.

and once they noticed something very queer.

They were in the middle of the Pioneer era! They went to a near restaurant, and with the little money he had Mike ordered he and Joan a small lunch.

"Will 75 be enough?" he asked, knowing that all he only had $2.30.

"Are you kidding?" and he started laughing wildly. "The grand total is fifty nine cents!" Of course, Mike thought, how could he have been so foolish! He was in the Pioneer era! People didn't have much money, as the prices would be low.

"Well sir, if you would let my sister and I explain, I'll tell you why I am strange."

"Just hold on there, it's going to be my lunch break in five minutes, so you can come outside." After Joan explained it for the second time, and Mike interrupting her to correct her mistakes, the cashier came to a conclusion.

"Well, my friends, you have to see the sheriff. Since there are a lot of houses with nice kids but most come, you'll probably go there. I'll take you there now." As they walked down the city streets, the children began to feel very self-conscious, because they kept on getting strange stares from children.

"Don't worry," Bob whispered, "they just think your clothes are funny, but that will all be changed when you get home," he assured them. When they reached the sheriff he called for the mayor to come to his office.

"These people that are coming," the sheriff

Development

A natural flow and sequence of events create a distinct sense of cohesion in this piece. Reasons are provided for story events and actions. When Mike is confused, Joan attempts to explain what has happened. When "nowhere" takes "the form of a little clearing," expectations are created for the reader and the action continues. The writer uses the retelling of the children's story as a unifying thread: "After Joan explained it for a second time." Phrases such as "As they walked" and "When they reached" are frequently used to provide continuity. The writer also uses dialogue effectively to continue the action and to reveal details about the characters and the setting. Throughout the story, Joan is portrayed as younger and less experienced. Mike maintains his "English whiz" qualities and his leadership role. His embarrassment about forgetting that food costs would be lower in "the Pioneer era" and his interruption to correct Joan's mistakes assist the reader in visualizing the scenes. As well, the dialogue is conversational in tone and is in keeping with the setting established: "Well, sir" and "Well, my friends." An attempt is made to create suspense through reference to a "strange time reversal." The ending,

began. Joan took out over. I was that they would be have one themselves. They only want to adopt. When they reached, Mike asked Joan, and he told the story. Eventually everyone listened it, and after a brief private interview with the adults the kids thanked Bob, then went home with their 'second set of parents'.

Sm school, and at home everything went well except for one thing - clothes. Although Joan enjoyed herself thoroughly with her dress and parasol, Mike wasn't too enthusiastic about his knickers, shoes, socks and caps. One day after school when the two were in regular clothes, they got permission to leave for a hike. They went into that same forest and surprisingly found an exact duplicate of the can. Mike kicked high up in the air, and the two waited for the mist. They were brought back and ran home. Filled with joy, Mike yelled

"Mom! Mom!" over and over. All of a sudden, his Mom came in saying

"Wake up Mike!"

"Huh?" Mike asked.

"Mike," his Mom started in a gentle voice, "you were unconscious, Joan ran home and got me, and then I went back and carried you home."

"Oh," said Mike trying to take it all in. "It was and it was only a dream, but then, who wanted to live in another era? It certainly didn't.

while somewhat predictable, is appropriate and conveys a sense of closure. The summary comment, in the form of a question followed by a short, effective concluding sentence, invites speculation on the reader's part.

Sentence Structure

The writer constructs sentences that are clear, varied, and effective. Short, simple sentences such as "But there was no answer." and "He certainly didn't." are skillfully employed. An occasional lengthy, complex sentence is also used effectively; for example, "Fortunately everyone believed it, and after a brief private interview, with the adults, the kids thanked Bob, then went home with their 'second set of parents'." Subordination is used occasionally to establish sequence: "After Joan explained it for the second time." Some sentences begin with phrases; for example, "In school" or "Filled with joy." The sentences that contain lines of dialogue vary in construction and length. The occasional use of questions in dialogue and in the narration adds interest to the piece.

Vocabulary

Specific words and expressions have been selected by the writer to establish details about the setting: "strange time reversal," "parasol," and "knickers." The writer also

gains attention with the use of such words and phrases as "duo," "private interview," and "'second set of parents'." Vivid images are created by such expressions as "getting strange stares" and "an exact duplicate." Specific verbs such as "blurted" and "repeated" add precision and interest to the writing. The writer displays an awareness of how choice of words can be used effectively when Joan's expression "knocked-you out" is corrected by Mike and changed to the more sophisticated "unconscious."

Conventions

The errors in this writing sample are infrequent and do not interfere with the clarity of the piece. Generally, this writer exhibits good control of the conventions of language, particularly given a test situation with time restraints. Dialogue, for the most part, is correctly paragraphed and punctuated. Commas are used accurately in a variety of circumstances. In some instances, the grammatical construction is incorrect: "ordered he and Joan" and "let my sister and I explain." An occasional word is missing. Spelling errors are rare; for example, "self-concious" is misspelled, yet "unconscious" is spelled correctly.

IDEAS/PLANNING AND DRAFTING

- must find some effect on land
- seems as if the mist had very strongly put them through an earlier era
- everything so very hard on them
- one day two go on a hike
- as they enter a somewhat "forest" the time changes again
- the further they go the further the time zones go
- all of a sudden when resting an exact duplicate of can appears
- decide to kick it and hope for the best
- amazingly it takes the two back to their time era
- Jean, then, is snatched by a bear coming from out of nowhere
- she screams in terror and fright
- Mike yells for her
- mom comes to Mike's bed to tell him he was only dreaming

Comments

The writer uses the IDEAS/PLANNING page to list potential story events sequentially yet does not write a draft. It is interesting to note that the events listed do not all appear in the story. Indeed, the revised work differs markedly from the plan. Some ideas are discarded, some appear in an altered sequence, and others are not retained in their entirety. It is possible to speculate as to how the writer uses planning to arrive at the completed work. Obviously, planning helps the writer to create a context that incorporates a time change and a forest setting. It also helps the writer find a direction for the piece. A duplicate can is kicked to return the characters to their own time, and Mike's mom comes to his bed to tell him he was only dreaming. Once the context and direction are established in the writer's mind, details that embellish and develop this skeletal form are added as the text is created. As the details are added, the plot takes shape in the writer's mind, and the writer allows the new story to evolve. The planning is useful as it gets ideas flowing, but the writer does not feel compelled to stay with the original plan. This writer's remarkable control of convention is apparent in the quality of writing. The revised work is the writer's only draft and is almost error free.

Student Sample B

General Comments

In this piece, the writer creates believable characters who behave in a consistent manner. The story events are logically connected and clearly explained. They lead to a convincing moral consequence. The writing is competent, energetic, and interesting. It is representative of 4 PROFICIENT in most reporting categories.

Now they were in a strange land. Everything seemed old fashioned. Two kids walked up to them. One of the children, a girl, spoke.

"Excuse me. But what are your names?" She smoothed her brown dress with ruffles and buttons.

"Um. M-my name is Joan. And this is my brother Mike. Do you happen to know in what direction 13262 132 street is? We are lost."

The old-fashioned children looked puzzled. They walked off.

Meanwhile, Mike was inspecting a white flower. It was very pretty.

"Oh! Let me see the flower!" Joan cried.

"No way." Mike answered. "I found it."

"Fine then oh, look! Here's that can!" She picked it up. Mike grabbed it from her.

Content

The writer immediately attempts to establish a setting with the first two sentences. Detail, embedded in dialogue, adds to the old-fashioned setting and creates an interesting image for the reader: "She smoothed her brown dress with ruffles and buttons." The characters are portrayed as argumentative and self-centred, and within this context their behavior throughout is consistent. Each wants what the other has. Dialogue is used to *show* rather than to *tell* the reader that the children quarrel over such small things as a flower. Another example of *showing* is found in the sentence: "The children looked pale." Their fear is implied. Wishes the children make are in keeping with their ages and their interests. Mike wants a dog and money. Joan wishes for "Esprit" clothing. The expressions they use in conversation with each other are also appropriate and effective:

"I wish we Here at home." he said.

Suddenly, the same White mist appeared. Again they were surrounded by it, and When the fog cleared, they found themselves in front of their house.

" Whoa! This can is magic! Let me see..." Mike said. "I Wish for a dog and tons of money." There Was that fog. And right before their eyes, a dog appeared along With 1,000,000.00$.

"All right! He yelled. We can Wish for anything we want! And I think I know why we were in that old-fashioned place. Because I was thinking of what it would be like if we lived way back in time!"

" Let me try" Said Joan. She took the can in her own hands "I wish for... a wardrobe entirely made up of 'Esprit' clothes!"

The same thing happened. But this time, a form appeared. It looked sort of like a gypsy. The children looked pale. There was weird music. The form began to speak

" I am Harbadas." He began. "I have come because you are very selfish You only want things for yourself and don't care about anyone else. Now you must be punished. I will turn you into pigs. Ugly, selfish pigs.

"No way," "Whoa!," and "All right!" Attempts are made to create mood: "Suddenly, the same white mist appeared." Harbados' speech is distinct in tone, appropriately creating further evidence of the magical powers of the can.

Development

A sense of sequence is achieved in the writing as one event leads logically to another. The writer uses reflective comments such as "And I think I know why," to explain what caused the initial story event and to assist the development of ideas. As well, the reappearance of the white mist helps to create unity and a little suspense in the piece. The use of words like "Meanwhile" and "Again" assist the flow of the writing. The ending is effective and appropriate. The children are turned into pigs. There is a sense of finality in "But it was too late. The last thing they heard." The development is unique in that the characters are returned to their original setting in the middle of the story, and their behavior in that setting leads to punishment for selfishness at the end of the story.

Sentence Structure

The construction of sentences in this writing is generally controlled. Short sentences are frequently used in dialogue and in narration: "We are lost." and

"No no!" Yelled Mike. "Please!" But it was too late.

The last thing they heard before they turned into pigs was:

YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN SO SELFISH!

And suddenly they were just two ugly pigs on a farm.

"There was that fog." A series of short sentences is used to create mood when the gypsy appears in the fog. Longer sentences are used occasionally to combine ideas: "Again they were surrounded by it, and when the fog cleared, they found themselves in front of their house." The fragment "Ugly, selfish pigs." is used effectively for emphasis.

Vocabulary

The writer frequently uses specific words and expressions to create images and provide details. Words like "puzzled" and "inspecting" are accurately and effectively used. Expressions such as "right before their eyes" and "a wardrobe entirely made up of 'Esprit' clothes" serve to create mental pictures for the reader.

Conventions

The consistent use of correct conventions enhances the quality of the piece. The writer experiments successfully with punctuation, including ellipses and a colon. In the final paragraph, correct indentation follows the use of the colon. Exclamation marks are frequently employed. This type of overuse often occurs when students experiment with a new feature in writing. Errors in spelling, capitalization, and grammar are almost non-existent.

IDEAS/PLANNING AND DRAFTING

Now they were in a strange land. Everything seemed old fashioned. Some kids about their age walked up to them. There was a girl in a dress with lots of buttons, And a boy with overalls and a checkered shirt.

"Excuse me, but what are your names?" Asked the girl

"Uh, um M. my name is Joan. And this is my brother Mike Do you happen to know where 12362 123 st. is? We are lost.

The old-fashioned children looked puzzled "Huh?" They said at the same time.

"I guess not then We have to be going. 'bye." Said Mike.

"Yeah 'bye" echoed Joan.

They walked away
"Gosh! They are weird!" Said Joan.
"Yeah they prob—"
"Hey, look!" Theres that can!

"We better keep it. Just in case we need it later on." Mike said. picking up the can peices. "I wish we were at home."

Suddenly the same white mist appeared Again they were surrounded by mist, and when the fog cleared up. they found themselves in front of their house. And the can was all in one peice again.

Comments

The writer ignores the IDEAS/PLANNING page and launches into a draft of the story. In this draft, the sequence of events unfolds much as it is seen in the revised work. What differs, however, are several details that add interest and life to the completed piece. For example, the argumentative relationship between Mike and Joan is added to develop their characters. Money is added to Mike's wish to emphasize his greed. Some details are omitted from the revised work. Occasionally, dialogue is reduced in order to tighten the passage. This writer displays considerable awareness of the function of revision.

"Whoa! This can is magic! Let me see. Um...I wish for a...dog!" Yelled Mike. He had always wanted a puppy. And there was the white mist again. When all was clear, they looked around...And there was a dog!

"All right! We can wish for anything we want! And I think I know why we were in that old-fashioned place. Because I was thinking about what it would be like if we lived way back in time!"

"Let me try." Said Joan. She took the can in her own hands.

"I wish for a..." She began. "A wardrobe of Esprit clothes!" The same thing happened. But this time, a form appeared. It looked sort of like a gypsy. There was this weird music. The form began to speak.

"I am Narbaros. I have come because you are very selfish. You only want things for yourself. If you had wished for no more evil, You would not have broken the rules of the wishing can. Now you must be punished. I will turn you into pigs. Selfish pigs. Ugly pigs.

"No no!" Yelled Mike. "Please!"

But it was to late. The last thing they heard before they turned into pigs was...

YOU SHOULD NEVER BE SO SELFISH!

And suddenly they were just two ugly pigs on a farm.

Student Sample C

General Comments

This writer completes the story adequately and with some degree of proficiency but does not manage to go beyond the conventional and predictable. It is representative of 3 SATISFACTORY in most reporting categories.

Mike and Joan noticed how everything had changed. Mike walked around in circles wondering what happened. Joan was just standing there, not knowing what happened. After Mike got tired of walking in circles he sat down.

"Where are we Mike?" Joan asked.

"I don't have the slightest idea," Mike replied squeakily.

"Why don't we walk down the road for a while? Maybe we will recognize something," Joan asked bravely.

"O.k."

They walked on but nothing looked familiar to neither of them except the road. They kept going. Then they saw this house, but no one was living in it. All the windows and doors were boarded up. The two kids just stood there.

Mike walked toward the house. He pulled off some boards out of the door. He turned the handle on the door. Slowly Mike opened the door. He went inside.

There wasn't anything in the house except a picture of Queen Elizabeth the third.

Content

In the initial paragraph, the writer creates a context in which "everything had changed" and the characters are lost and disoriented: "Mike walked around in circles woundering what happened." Contrast is achieved with Joan "just standing there." The events that follow are believable. A problem is set up and resolved in the context of the characters' continuing state of disorientation. Investigation of an empty house produces tears in Joan and anger in Mike. Another can is kicked and everything returns to normal. The setting is described in general terms: "the windows and doors were boarded up." The "picture of Queen Elizibeth the third" implies a shift in time to the future. The characters' feelings are frequently mentioned. Initially Mike is confused while Joan is brave. Later Joan cries and Mike is confident. However, his frustration leads to anger.

Then Joan came on. She look around then started to cry.

"It's ok we'll find mom and dad." Mike said with confidence.

The two went out of the house and started walking down the road looking everything in sight. Then Mike kicked a can as hard as he could because of his anger.

Then when it hit the ground, that strange mist came out again. When the mist cleared the two ran back to the house and found that they were back to the same time and day of when they left.

Development

The story events follow one another in a general sequence. Attempts are made to provide continuity. For instance, Joan suggests: "Why don't we walk down the road for a while? Maybe we will reconize something." This creates expectations for the reader and continues the action. "Then" is used consistently to make the transition from one event to another. Suspense is attempted through the withholding of information. Initially nothing is familiar except the road; then Mike and Joan see their house, but it is boarded up. The series of actions at the boarded-up house may be seen as an attempt to create suspense. Some effort is made to include details about characters' feelings. They speak "squeakily" or "bravely." Mike offers a comforting remark "with confidence." The ending achieves a sense of closure but is quite predictable.

Sentence Structure

All of the sentences in this piece of writing are complete. Many sentences are short and simple. In the sequence about the boarded-up house, the brevity of construction is effective. There are a few attempts to include lengthier sentences that combine two or more ideas: "When the mist cleared the two ran back to the house and found that they were back to the same time and day of

when they left." Attempts are occasionally made to vary sentence beginnings: "Slowly Mike opened the door."

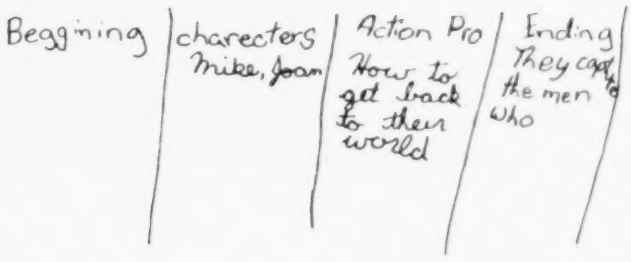
Vocabulary

For the most part, the words and expressions used are general and ordinary. In a few instances, specific words are used in an attempt to create images. The boarded-up house contains "a picture of Queen Elizibeth the third." The writer uses language reminiscent of natural speech in the sentence, "I don't have the slightest idea." Also, "replied" is used as a synonym for said. An attempt is made to create interest with the inclusion of adverbs such as "squeakily" and "bravely." All words are used accurately.

Conventions

This writer exhibits control in the areas of capitalization and punctuation. Errors in spelling occur in a few instances where the writer appears to be taking risks with vocabulary. Examples include "woundering" and "frimiliar." Otherwise, the spelling is generally correct. It is interesting to note that "reconize" is spelled correctly in the draft. A few awkward phrases are included: "nothing looked frimiliar to neither

IDEAS/PLANNING AND DRAFTING



Mike and Joan noticed how everything had changeed. Mike walk around in circles wounder what happened. Joan was just standing there not knowing what happened. After Mike got tired of walking in circles he sat down.

"Where are we Mike?" Joan asked.

"I don't have the slightest idea," Mike replied squeakily "Why don't we walk down the road for awhile? Maybe we will recognize something." Joan said bravely "O.k."

of them" and "the same time and day of when." The tense is consistent and errors do not interfere with the clarity of the communication.

Comments

The writer uses the IDEAS/PLANNING page to attend to story elements. The problem is established and a potential ending is noted yet not used. The draft and revised work are very similar. Printing in the draft becomes neater handwriting in the revised work. Essentially, the writer proofreads the draft and subsequently adds appropriate word endings and a few correct spellings to the revised piece. In a few instances, letters or punctuation marks are written over in the original draft in order to correct punctuation, spelling, or capitalization of proper nouns. This writer is aware of proofreading but does not understand revision yet.

They walked on, but nothing looked familiar to neither of them except the road. They kept going. Then they saw their house, but no one was living in it all the windows and doors were boarded up. The two kids just stood there. Mike walked toward the house. He pulled off some boards out of the door. He turned the handle on the door. Slowly Mike opened the door. He went inside.

There wasn't anything in the house except a picture of Queen Elizabeth the third. The four came in. She looked around then started to cry.

"It's ok we'll find mom and dad" Mike said with confedents.

The two went out of the house and started walking down the road again kicking every thing in sight. Then Mike kicked a can as hard as he could because of his anger.

Then when it hit the ground, that strange mist came again. When the mist cleared the two ran back to the house and found that the were back to the same time and day of when they left.

Student Sample D

General Comments

This writer tries to create a piece that will complete the assignment, but the story presented is less than satisfactory. The series of events is plausible, but no clear story line emerges. Competence and control are not complete. This writing is representative of 2 LIMITED in most reporting categories.

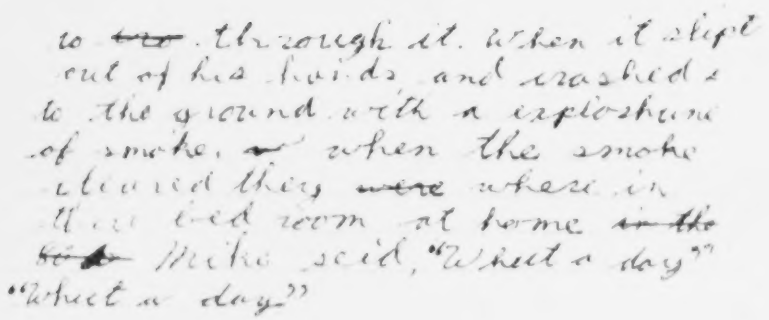
We were walking for about five minutes when a old ford rumbled past with a cloud of smoke. We were cophing for a while. Joan said "boy ~~could~~ whats a car?" "Ya what a hunk of junk A cuple of hours latter an old man with grey hair and a green house. I asked him ~~an~~ whatt year is this he said, in a gentle voise "1947 son" "thanck you ser" And we walked off Pete said Joan do you have any money" "Ya why" ~~I am~~ hungry" Me to lets get some thing to eat" we terned the corner and there was a store called Greene Food. We went in side and it was all so very cheap. We bought a loof of bread & peanut buter and jelly and ~~a~~ bottle of milk for 75¢. After eating we walked back down the street. Joan saw a little bottle and were about

Content

There are attempts made by the writer to set the events of the story in time and in a locale. References are made to the year, "Greens Food" store, and a street. Within this context, the characters' actions are plausible yet not purposefully connected to each other. Some details are provided in order to situate the characters: "we terned the corner" and "we walked back down the street." The attempt to describe "an old man with grey hair and a green house" results in an incongruous combination of descriptors. The problem originates in incorrect transcription of the draft. At times, the writer assumes the role of one of the characters and manages to create a conversational tone in the dialogue.

Development

The story appears to consist of a series of unrelated events or vignettes.


to ~~her~~ through it. when it slipt out of his hands and crashed to the ground with a exploshune of smoke. ~~and~~ when the smoke clearid they ~~were~~ where in Mikes bed room at home ~~in the~~ ~~bed~~ Mike said, "what a day" "what a day"

Details that describe the car and the store fail to assist the development of characters or their actions. The writer attempts to document the passage of time with expressions such as "for about five minites," "for a wile," "cuple of hours latter," and "After eatting." While the story ending is present, it is abrupt.

Sentence Structure

This writer seems to possess a basic sense of sentence structure but lacks skill in punctuating sentences correctly. There is little variation in sentence construction. Most often sentences begin with "We" or with an adverbial clause that starts with "When." One or two fragments appear but these may be a consequence of the inaccurate transcription of the drafting work.

Vocabulary

Occasionally, the writer uses specific words or expressions like "in a gentle voise" and "exploshune of smoke." An attempt is made to create an image with the description of the bottle that slips out of Joan's hands and explodes in a cloud of smoke. A few terms and phrases stand out and add life to the piece: "runbled" and "all so very cheep." Otherwise, general words tend to be used.

IDEAS/PLANNING AND DRAFTING

they look around and every
thing was chonge they kept on
walking, and a old ford rumbled
past in a little whill asked
a man what year is it he said
1943 ~ Mget food

See a drops a bottle and a puff of
smoke they go home again

We were walked for about 5 minits and then
sudenly an old ford rumbled past us with
a cloud of smoke. We were cofing for a
wile till the smoke cleard. Joan sied, "Ivory
what a car" "Ya what a hunk of junk
a cupple of hours lutter There was
a man sitting on the front porch we asted
him what year it is. He seid it was 1943

Conventions

Frequent errors detract from the quality of the writing. Spelling mistakes are prevalent. Compound words are separated: "some thing" and "in side." The writer attempts to use quotation marks but does not have this convention under control. Some sentences are not correctly capitalized or punctuated, creating confusion for the reader. Additional lack of clarity is caused by a shift in the writer's point of view: "I" and "we" become Joan and Mike. The writer has determined that Joan is male.

Comments

The IDEAS/PLANNING page is used by this writer to sketch out a sequence of events. The draft differs from the revised work in small but significant ways. Some important details, which are omitted on the revised work, weaken the piece: "'till the smoke cleard," "sitting on the front porch," and "lets see if we can find a store." These omissions are likely transcription errors. The writer takes greater risks with vocabulary in the draft. Unfortunately, words like "sudenly," "redickusly," and "edventure" are omitted or replaced in the revised piece. On the other hand, a few effective additions to the draft can be found. Dialogue is added and a few corrections in capitalization and spelling are made.

Mike said, "I am getting hungry do you have any money?"

Only $1.50 in change" lets see if we can find a store. We turned the corner and there was a store called Green's Food we went inside

it was all so reddichuly cheap

we bout a loaf of bread and peanut

butter and jelly a bottle of milk for 75¢

after eating we were walking back

down the street. Joan saw a little

glass bottle he picked it up. And was

going to trow it when it sliped out

of ~~her~~ his hand and crashed to the

ground explosheune of smoke Mike

said "not again?" When it cleard

they were at Joan house on the

tramp.

"What an edventure" they both

said.

Student Sample E

General Comments

This writer attempts to create a story that centres on the idea presented in the title, but the writer's lack of competence is apparent. Details and explanations are minimal, and several assumptions made by the writer are not clarified. This piece is representative of 1 POOR in most reporting categories.

"Oh mike were kerst by this, this mist."
dont worry, will goto the wise old man back in the city... It Took 10min to get to the old wise mans house. And whine They got ther This is what he sade "I am very old and I can no longer Remove a kers, you nead to go out of Scotland, you nead to goto France to see The pobe about this". Thenk you old man" mike sade.

They whint out of his house and Joan sad " we must lear now, for France" "but what about mom and dad" mike sad "we can't go home with This, this thing!" Joan sad: "Then it's Sclold we leave now For France" mike sad...

Mike and Joan whint to France to see the poBe about ther Prapelem, this is what hampond. "TTTthh daa boom I now Remove your kers and Put it on me TTIThh daa boom!" "but the kers is on you now" mike sad. "ah I don't mine, now! peopel won't aways Look at my feet"!

Content

The events in this story tend to be implausible and are presented in a somewhat confusing manner. Details that describe the "kers" or the reason why the "pobe" is in France are absent. Very little information is given about the characters and the setting. The writer manages to create a conversational tone in the passages of dialogue.

Development

A sequence of events is discernible, but the events are not fully or clearly described. A few attempts are made to create a sense of the passing of time with phrases like "took 10 min" and "whine they got ther." The ending is somewhat inappropriate. The writer does not explain how or why the "kers" is transferred to the "pobe's" feet.

Sentence Structure

The writer seems to have sentence sense, but the lack of capitalization and punctuation is distracting. Control of sentence construction has not been achieved. Sentence type and length are varied occasionally.

Vocabulary

The writer attempts to add a dramatic touch with "TTTThh daa boom," an invented incantation. Otherwise, vague and general words predominate. Word choice is restricted; for example, "said" is used repeatedly.

Conventions

Spelling errors are frequent in common words like "sad" (said) and "Whint" (went) as well as in less familiar words like "kers" (curse) and "seloud" (settled). Some errors likely reflect the writer's pronunciation of the words: "propelm" (problem) and "hampond" (happened). Capitalization of proper nouns and sentence beginnings is not fully controlled. Punctuation, while attempted, is only partially under control. The incantation and direct speech are enclosed within quotation marks. The profusion of errors interferes with the clarity of the communication.

IDEAS/PLANNING AND DRAFTING

Plot- Kerst by the mist.

-Mike and Joan go to a wise old man
and to see what he can do
-wise old man tells them to go, to a pope.
-the pope gets Kerst by the mist but tells
Them not to worer because he likes The mist

"Oh mike were Kerst by this, this mist!" "don't worery, well
go to The old wise man back, in the City...
It took 10 min to get to the old wise mans house.
and when they got ther this is what he Sad
" I am very old and I can no longer ~~do that~~ Remove a Kerst,
you need to go out of Scotelord, you need to go to France
to see the Pobe about this"
"Thank you old man" mike sade,
They whint out of his house and Joan Sad" We must leav
for frans now" "but what about Mom and dad" mike Sad
"we Cant go home with this, Tis thing" Joan Sad
"Then its Seldd well leave now For France" Mike Sad..
Mike and Joan France to See the Pobe about Ther
Propelom, This is what he meant.
"TTTThh daa boom I ~~know~~ Remove your Kerst and Put it
on me TTh daa boom" "but The Kers is on you how" mikese
"ah I don't mine how people I won't always ~~this~~ felle me's

Comments

A sequence of events is outlined on the IDEAS/PLANNING page, but the proposed ending is altered in the draft, adding confusion to the work. In transcribing the draft, the writer shows some awareness of spelling, and a few corrections are approximated or achieved. Otherwise, very little has been changed from the draft to the revised work.

APPROACHES

TO

PLANNING AND DRAFTING

Approaches to Planning

In the General Instructions for the test, provision is made for students who want to write down their ideas and/or make a plan before they write the story.

The IDEAS/PLANNING page of the June 1988 achievement test booklet was used by many but not all students. Those who do not use the page may not need it. Some students engage in various forms of mental planning and do not want or need to commit their ideas to paper. On the other hand, some students may not be aware of how planning can help them with their writing, or they may not have had experience with planning strategies. There are many methods that students can use to plan their work. Students need to experiment with a variety of planning techniques until they find the ones that best suit their individual writing styles and work most successfully for them. The following samples are representative of the range of techniques employed by students on the June 1988 achievement test.

IDEAS/PLANNING

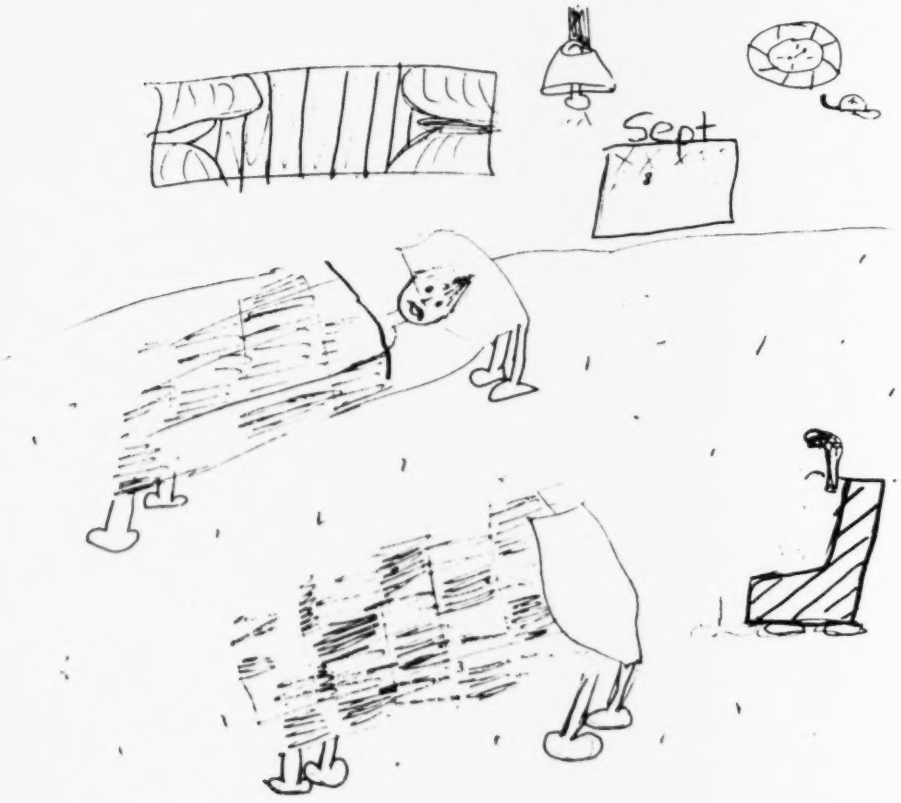
Comments

This writer draws a map and plots the route taken by the major characters as their adventure unfolds.

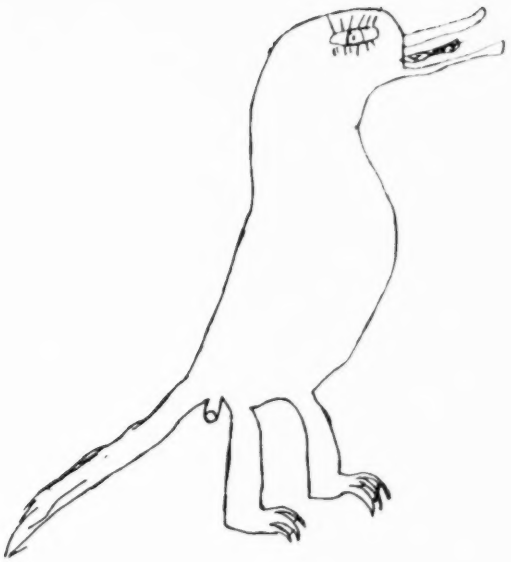
This map shows how the main characters travel, but it also uses pictures to develop graphically some of the imaginary land in which the story is situated.

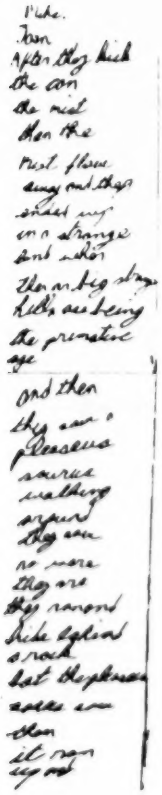
A brief synopsis and a drawing are used by this writer to plan. Each detail in the drawing has significance in terms of the subsequent text created.

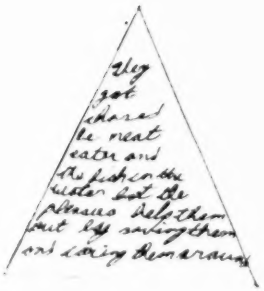
Mike and Joan were able to get out of the fog. But a tragical thing happened to them. They didn't really enjoy the summer they spent there summer in the hospital because they had a bad chemical in there blod that poised them. But in the end they recover the days before school starts.

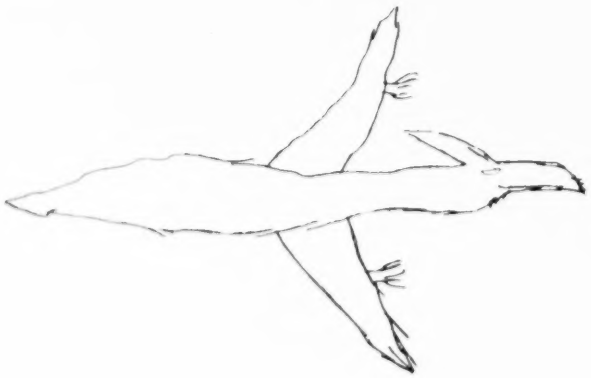


This writer also combines written and graphic planning strategies. Initially, the beginning, middle, and end of the story are summarized in a geometric configuration. On subsequent planning pages, the writer draws large pictures of the dinosaurs mentioned in the initial planning.









I. What Mike & Joan saw and heard.
   A. The Forest.
   B. The Sh[illegible]s.
   C. The An[illegible]ls.
II. What Mike and Joan did.
   A. Setting up a camp.
   B. Exploring.
   C. Getting Food.
   D. Mike[illegible]

A format resembling the traditional outline is the method that this writer has chosen for planning. Ideas concerning setting and action are listed under the two major headings.

A sentence or two serve to summarize the writer's plan for the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Initially, the characters and setting are established. A problem arises and is resolved.

intro: Mike and Joan Hatchin lived in Deep River, Saskatchewan, in 1988.
After the mist they were in Zambia, Africa. 1988
They had to learn to survive in a <u>new</u> lifestyle.

middle: They were starting to forget their old life and Rolambaa, the old African Chief, warned them not to. He told them to hurry and get back to Canada. How?

end: After a long journey they found themselves in Canada at the same time, place etc.

Points of narrative

① Introduction
② Problem arises
③ Climax
④ Solution
⑤ Ending

- appositive
- paragraphing
- characters
- description

Using five "points of narrative," the writer outlines story events with brief sentences that address each of the points. Elements that the writer intends to keep in mind are also listed in point form.

① They end up in a jungle
② The plant they're in has many different climates.
③ A storm comes; they have to find shelter
④ They find a cave.
⑤ The cave has a series of pictures that are times in history.
⑥ When you touch the pictures you go back in time to that place.

Plan

This plan combines summary statements about the setting and plot with a list of story details.

They were in a different world which everybody turned into animals! Except Mike and Joan

flying
building
weird animals
weird people
have anything
be anything

This is a mysterious story, which Mike and Joan get into alot of trouble

S- Mike Joan Geni after school Friday (last day) On trail walking home

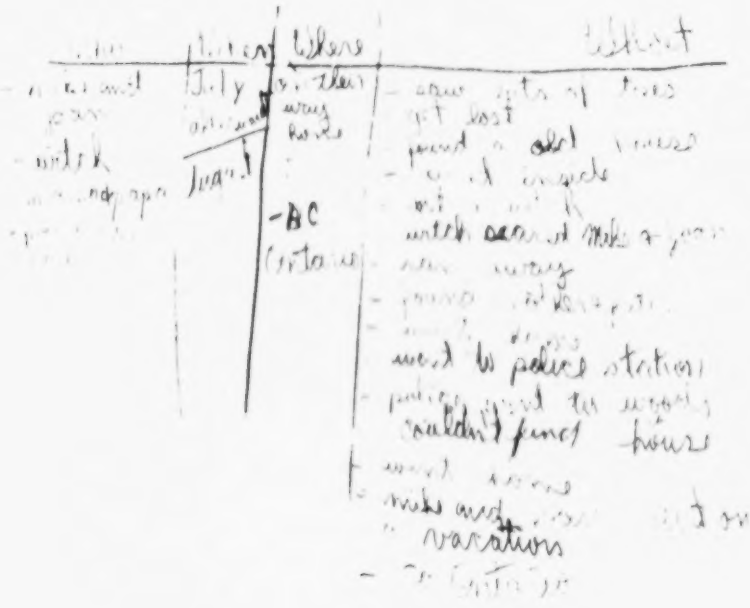
T- Geni changes everything and kids want it changed back.

O- Geni comes out of can, changes things, wins

R- Kids put Geni back in can. Yes

Y- put Geni back in can everything changed back and normal)

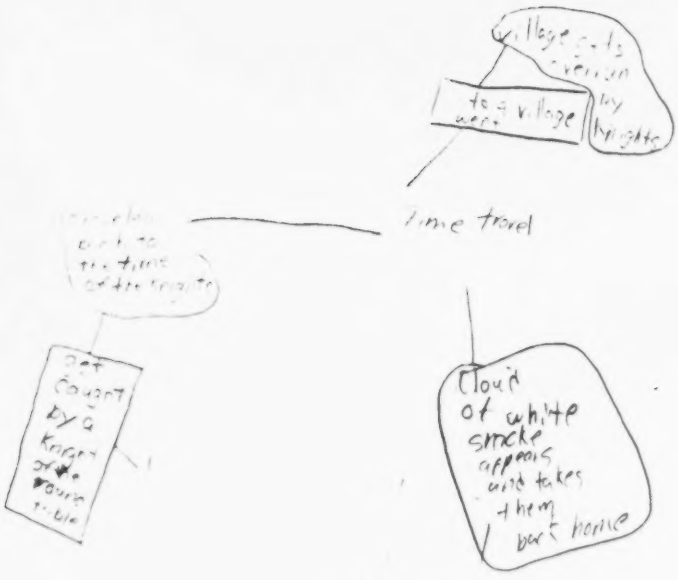
This writer attempts to use the letters that spell "story" as an acronym to outline essential elements of the story. Characters, setting, problem resolution, and conclusion are all addressed.



The headings "Who, When, Where, and What" are used by this writer to organize ideas. Details pertaining to each heading are listed in point form in the appropriate column.

This writer makes use of a web to represent visually how the story's central ideas are ordered and how the thoughts are related to one another.

Two planning strategies are employed by this writer. A web is used to chart the action and events in the story, and a list of possible monster characters is outlined.



Brainstorming for Monsters

Dragon
Linx
goblin
hobgoblin
nightcrawler
spinx
minator
brainsucker
green slime
grayozzes
vampires
zombies
skeletons
silver snakes

Approaches to Drafting

In the General Instructions, provision is also made for students who want to write a draft of their story on the pages labelled PLANNING AND DRAFTING. Not all students make use of these pages. For some, the time restraints imposed by the testing situation may preclude any inclination to attempt to write a draft. For many others, writing a draft copy means concentration only on composition rather than on penmanship. In these cases, the handwriting in the draft copy differs markedly from that in the revised copy, but the text remains virtually identical.

On a number of papers there is evidence that students proofread their drafts in order to attend to matters of convention. Incorrectly spelled words are crossed out, missing words are inserted, and punctuation is corrected or added.

In a few instances, students find enough time to revise their work. In these cases, students either add or delete material when they transcribe their draft copies. For example, in the following sample, the writer adds detail to the draft copy in order to extend the description of the characters' feelings and actions.

PLANNING AND DRAFTING

It took a while for the mist to clear, but when it did they found themselves in a tiny town of houses as tall as they were. A tiny man hobbled up the road with a gun in his hand. He poked Joan and then mike and said in a high squeaky voice
"What are ya?"

Mike smiled and returned the question:
"What are ya?"

REVISED WORK

It took a while for the mist to clear. When it did they looked around only to find themselves in a small town. The houses were only as tall as they were. Joan and Mike looked at each other with the same questioning look. A tiny man hobbled up the cobble-stone road with a rifle in his hand.

the shutters of the houses opened as people stared at them in horrified glances. The little man then said:

"I'm not scared of you" his voice was squeaky and shaking.

He poked Mike and then Joan. He walked around them at least a dozen times. He bent down and studied their feet. He scratched his head and rubbed his beard.

"What are ya?" he said finally after brushing pretend lint of of his vest "and what are you doing here?"

In contrast, the following example illustrates how one writer chooses to omit a portion of the draft in order to tighten the introduction in the revised work.

PLANNING AND DRAFTING

Mike and Joan noticed how everything had changed. Everything seemed to get bigger as they walked along to get home.

"I'm scared mike!" exclaimed Joan worriedly to her brother.

"Don't worry we'll probably wake up to the sound of our alarm clock any second now!" said Mike trying to sound brave. But he was scared too. It's not every day you get to shrink, you know. Five minutes went by, ten minutes. Fifteen minutes and twenty, but still no hope, the alarm clock didn't go off.

"I keep on hoping it's all a nightm-
-are." cried Joan.

"You think you're the only one?" screamed Mike furiously.

"OK, OK" said Joan calming down, "don't get hysterie!"

"We should be in this together not by ourselves." said Joan soothingly.

REVISED WORK

Im Shrinking!

Mike and Joan noticed how everything had changed. Everything seemed to get bigger as they walked along to get home.

"I'm scared mike!" exclaimed Joan worriedly to her brother.

"I keep on hoping it's all a nightmare too." said Mike scared stiff.

"Oh, OK, don't get hysterie!" cried Joan. "We should be in this to-gether not by ourselves." said Joan soothingly.

Very few Grade 6 students are capable of making independent decisions about how to improve their writing in time-limited circumstances. In classroom writing situations, teachers can help students learn editing and revision skills through direct instruction and through extended opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers.

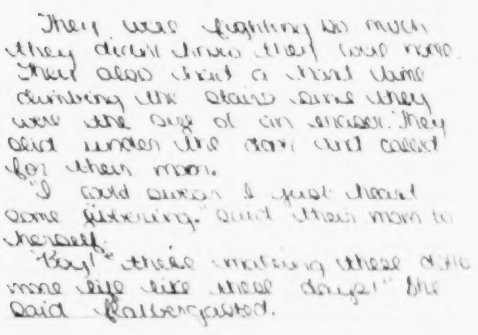
DEVELOPMENT

ISSUES

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

When students are learning to write, they gradually develop confidence and competence in their ability to cope with a very complex task. Each student's developmental pattern is unique, yet certain commonalities may be observed as students attempt to gain control over various elements of composition. In the Grade 6 papers, students took risks with their writing and experimented with several literary devices. Their efforts were not all entirely successful but must be viewed as an indication of their awareness of the range of possibilities open to them as writers. Teachers can help students by becoming aware of their fledgling attempts to incorporate new features into their writing. These attempts need to be supported and encouraged, but they can also be seen as opportunities for teachers to instruct students within a meaningful context.

The risk-taking observed on the achievement test occurs at many levels. Students strive to use sophisticated words and phrases in their writing with varying degrees of success. They try to manipulate language to achieve ambitious goals. In the following example, the writer attempts to describe through comparison and analogy:



In this passage, the writer attempts to use eraser size in a somewhat metaphorical sense. The comparison is embellished when characters slide under the door and meet their mother. The effort is not entirely fluent, but it may be viewed as an indication of potential for more sophisticated writing. The writer tries to *show* rather than *tell* how small the characters are by having the mother mistake them for dolls. This analogy may be lacking in clarity but, again, may be seen as a sign of promise in the writing.

As students experiment with new features in their writing, they may tend to focus or concentrate on the new feature and temporarily lapse in their management of previously controlled features. This type of transient regression is often a natural consequence of experimentation.

When students are learning about and practising new techniques in their writing, they may use those strategies in excess for a short period of time. Many Grade 6 students use extended passages of dialogue in their stories with varying degrees of success. They experiment with structure and tone in conversations. They experiment with paragraphing and punctuation. In the following example, the writer uses dialogue for almost the entire piece:

Mayle Mayle Not

School was out and it was the start of another summer vacation. Mike and Joan had been looking forwrd to it but found that they were quite board so they lazily just kicked ~~stuff~~ sticks and Stones around.

As Joan was kicking sticks and Stones around Mike spotted a can. He kicked it and it just soared through the air. As it was soaring it split and a white foggy mist escaped.

Very quickly the children were surrounded with it and not until they could see again did they notice how everything had changed.

"Did you have a careful trip?" said a voice.

"Where are we?" exclaimed Mike.

"And who are you?" replied Joan.

"You are inside my bottle. And I'm a magic ~~genie~~ genie," said ~~a voice~~ the genie.

"Ya right and I'm Fred Flintstone," said Joan sarcastically.

"You can't be a genie because genies don't exist and we can't be in a ~~can~~ bottle because number one ~~we~~ are too big and ~~nuber~~ number two this bottle has satin walls and a bed in it," replied Mike.

"Wong," answered the genie.

"Why?" spoke Mike

"Because number one genies do exist and number two

The use of dialogue in this selection may be viewed as excessive, yet the writer is attempting many things within conversation. The story unfolds through talk. The exchanges are fluent, expressive, and coherent. Speakers' voices may be heard. Several synonyms for "said" are used. Some alternatives are carefully and accurately chosen. The use of "said Joan sarcastically" is particularly effective. Other choices work well: "exclaimed," "replied," "answered," "stated," and "asked." Only one distinct error in usage occurs: "'Why?' spoke Mike." The writer also attempts to vary the length and structure of the direct speech. Considerable attention is given to correct paragraphing and punctuation. It appears as if the writer went back to insert end markers and quotation marks after the words were written. A few marks are missing but, on the whole, control of the conventions of dialogue is demonstrated.

you have shrunk to my size", stated the ~~genie~~ genie.

"But how," said Joan amazed.

"I'm a genie I can do anything," explained the genie.

"Can you please tell us one thing. Why are we here?" asked Joan.

"Oh I almost forgot. Well, When you kicked the can you released me from a spell. You see about one hundered years ago this wizard ~~did~~ didn't like me so he put in a can and there was no way of getting out unless someone broke the spell and there was only one way the spell could be broken and that was if ~~it~~ someone broke the can," said the genie.

"And I broke the can, said Mike.

Exactly. And so I'm granting you one wish only, so you ~~two~~ should consult with your sister," explained the genie.

There was a pause and finally they said there wish was to go ...

Mike, Joan wake up you have to go and help your

dad clean up the yard and garage today.

"Mike I have the best dream to tell you ~~that~~," said Joan.

"Me too," ~~said~~ exclaimed Mike.

Mike and Joan just looked at each other and smiled.

Maybe it was real ~~was~~ was it

The comment on this particular piece of writing is detailed and lengthy. It is an illustration of how students' writing can be examined to determine what is going on within one writing feature, namely dialogue. If teachers are willing to take the time to examine students' writing closely they can analyse some of the things that student writers do. They can then help students to become more conscious of what they do well as writers and what aspects of writing they need to bring under control. In this way, students gain awareness of the fact that there is no single "correct" way to write. They learn about the processes that work for them as individuals.

APPENDIX

Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test, Part A

Scoring Guide

SCORING GUIDES PART A: COMPOSITION

REPORTING CATEGORY: CONTENT

Selecting details to achieve a purpose

Details chosen by the student may be descriptive details associated with characters or setting and/or narrative details associated with actions or events.

SCORE	DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE	
5	EXCELLENT	Events and/or actions are plausible within the context established by the writer. Events and/or actions are consistent with atmosphere and character motivation. Specific details describe characters physically, and clearly indicate or suggest their motives. Specific details describe the setting, and create and sustain atmosphere or mood.
4	PROFICIENT	Events and/or actions are plausible within the context established by the writer. Events and/or actions are connected to character motivation. Appropriate details describe characters clearly and hint at their motives. Details describing the setting may create, but do not sustain, atmosphere or mood.
3	SATISFACTORY	Events and/or actions are plausible within the context established by the writer, although credibility may occasionally falter. Events and/or actions are conventional and predictable. Appropriate but generalized details describe characters and setting(s). Details that clarify motivation or establish mood may be imprecise or absent.
2	LIMITED	Events and/or actions are generally plausible within the writer's context, but many events or actions lack credibility, OR events and/or actions are predictable. Details that are present are vaguely described.
1	POOR	Events and/or actions may be generally plausible, OR they may be presented in a confusing manner. Appropriate details that describe character and setting are lacking. Details that are present confuse rather than clarify the action, characters, and/or setting.
INS	INSUFFICIENT	The student has written so little that it is not possible to assess the content, OR the student has developed a context that does not fit within the possibilities of the assignment.

REPORTING CATEGORY: DEVELOPMENT

Organizing details into a coherent whole

SCORE	DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE	
5	EXCELLENT	Events and/or actions are ordered in a coherent sequence for effect. Suspense may be developed. Details describing characters and setting are skilfully connected to the story's action. The story's ending conveys an appropriate sense of closure.
4	PROFICIENT	Events and/or actions are ordered in a coherent sequence. Suspense may be attempted. Details describing characters and setting are clearly connected to the story's action. A sense of closure is achieved.
3	SATISFACTORY	Events and/or actions are ordered in a generally coherent sequence. Details describing characters and setting may seem to be included as afterthoughts BUT do not act as a disorganizing influence. A sense of closure is attempted.
2	LIMITED	A sequencing of events and/or actions can be detected, BUT coherence is not achieved. Details describing characters and/or setting are not connected to the story's action. A sense of closure is absent, OR if attempted, it is inappropriate or abrupt.
1	POOR	A sequencing of events is barely discernible. The presentation is confusing. A sense of closure is absent, inappropriate, or jarringly abrupt.

REPORTING CATEGORY: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Structuring sentences effectively

SCORE	DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE	
5	EXCELLENT	Sentence construction is effectively and consistently controlled. Sentence type and length are effective and varied. Co-ordination is controlled, and subordination is used appropriately. Sentence fragments, if used, are used successfully for effect.
4	PROFICIENT	Sentence construction is controlled. Sentence type and length are often effective and varied. Co-ordination may be present but is not over-used. Subordination is successfully attempted. Sentence fragments and/or run-on sentences, if used, are used for effect and do not impede clarity.
3	SATISFACTORY	Sentence construction is generally controlled. Sentence type and length are sometimes varied for effect, although co-ordination may be over-used. Subordination may be present. Sentence fragments and/or run-on sentences, if used, occasionally impede clarity.
2	LIMITED	Sentence construction sometimes lacks control. Sentence type and length are rarely varied and/or an overdependence on co-ordination is demonstrated. Subordination, if used, is inappropriate or uncontrolled. Sentence fragments and/or run-on sentences are frequently used and impede clarity.
1	POOR	Sentence construction generally lacks control. Sentence type, length, and structure are immature and repetitious in pattern. Co-ordination is used repeatedly. Sentence fragments and/or run-on sentences are common and severely impede clarity.

REPORTING CATEGORY: VOCABULARY

Using effective words and expressions

SCORE	DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE	
5	EXCELLENT	Specific words and expressions are carefully selected to create vivid images and/or to create clear and precise details. Words are used accurately and effectively.
4	PROFICIENT	Specific words and expressions are frequently used and show some evidence of careful selection to create images and/or to add clarity to details. Words are used accurately and often effectively.
3	SATISFACTORY	Specific words and expressions are occasionally used to add clarity to images and details, but general words are more apparent. Words are generally used accurately.
2	LIMITED	General words and expressions are frequently used where specific words and expressions would have been more effective. Specific words, if present, may be used inappropriately.
1	POOR	General or vague words and expressions predominate. The choice of words is restricted.

REPORTING CATEGORY: CONVENTIONS

Using the conventions of language correctly and effectively

SCORE	DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE	
5	EXCELLENT	The quality of writing is enhanced because of consistently correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Errors are seldom present and do not affect the clarity of the communication.
4	PROFICIENT	The quality of writing is reinforced because of essentially correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Errors that are occasionally present do not affect the clarity of the communication.
3	SATISFACTORY	The quality of writing is adequate because of generally correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Errors that are present sometimes affect the clarity of the communication.
2	LIMITED	The quality of writing is reduced because of generally incorrect capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Errors that are present often affect the clarity of the communication.
1	POOR	The quality of writing is weak because of consistently incorrect capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Errors that are present severely affect the clarity of the communication.